

Discussion on the New Mode of “Elder-Supporting-Elder” for Elder Nursing Service

A Case Study on Survey of J Village of Yichang City in Hubei

Jifeng Xiong

Wuhan University of Science and Technology
Wuhan, China 430065

Jingjing Zou

Wuhan University of Science and Technology
Wuhan, China 430065

Abstract—With the aggravation of population aging in China, the problem of elder nursing in rural areas have become increasingly prominent, “elder-supporting-elder”, i.e. mutual support has become a new way to solve the problem of elder nursing in rural area. This paper has discussed the new mode of “elder-supporting-elder” for elder nursing in rural area through cases analysis by combining the survey in J Village, Yichang City of Hubei, and we presented a new conception for the further promotion of “elder-supporting-elder” on this basis and combined with the actual situation, hoping to realize the mutual support mode among the old people in the vast rural areas of China.

Keywords—rural area; elder-supporting-elder; mutual support; new conception

I. INTRODUCTION

With the aggravation of aging of population in China, the problem of elder nursing has become an important problem attached close attention by the Party and the country, the problem of elder nursing is particularly prominent in the rural area with relative undeveloped economy. At present, new rural endowment insurance policy has been implemented in vast rural area in China, and many old people has been benefited from this, the implementation of the new rural endowment insurance policy changed the situation of no guarantee for the old people in rural area in the past, but even so, the new rural endowment insurance also cannot play a functions equivalent to the city vocational insurance and city residence insurance. Firstly, in considering the actual situation of the economic development in rural areas of China, new rural endowment insurance policy is not a mandatory insurance like city vocational insurance and city residence insurance, on the contrary, it encourage farmers to be insured basing on the principle of voluntary participation, but in rural area, some old people did not choose to be insured due to various reasons, they still rely on the traditional mode of family supporting; secondly, for the old people who have been insured by the new rural endowment insurance, their treatment level is still low because the payment of new agricultural insurance is low, the pension they received cannot meet the daily needs of individuals, and the majority of old people still need family elder nursing as complement support, however, as the lifestyles and family structures are changing, the family elder

nursing will also gradually lose the security function, thus the weak new rural endowment insurance cannot effectively protect the life of the old people.

Therefore, we instantly need to find more new ways to compensate the insufficient of elder nursing policy in rural area, these ways shall both effectively alternate family elder nursing, but also complement the new rural endowment insurance as well as attract the old people actively participate in it. Now, the new mode of “elder-supporting-elder” i.e. mutual support among old people has been introduced to many places, this way of elder nursing has its incomparable differentiation advantage, and it can provide new thinking path for the development of future elder nursing in the rural area.

II. THE ADVANTAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF “ELDER-SUPPORTING-ELDER”

The mutual support among the old people is a unique elder nursing way, the reason why it is different from other previous elder nursing way mainly is that it is not an elder nursing implemented between generations but between the same generations. In the previous elder nursing mode, both family elder nursing or social elder nursing depends on the next generation’s supporting for the last generation, which reflects morality and ethics and legal obligations, that is the moral of respecting and caring for the old people and the duty of support to the old people borne by the children which we are familiar with. This elder nursing way substantially lacking mutual support volunteerism, while “elder-supporting-elder” just can break the inherent thinking, it is not moral and ethical bundling or legal compulsion, but a mutual support between the same generations and an effective integration of resources, and such mutual support has its own advantages.

A. Exploit the Value of Old People and Achieve Measures Adjustment in Accordance with Individual Conditions

It seems like that the old people groups are vulnerable groups in society, but in reality, it is a group with great development and utilization value. In the rural area, many of them have good physical condition and professional skills, and they are still relative young, they can both effectively achieve self-supported and supporting other old people

within a certain range and a certain ability, for example, the old people who have been engaged in special vocations of doctor, nurses and counselors, although their physical function are inferior to the young after they retired, but their working skill mastered during decades employment is richer than that of the younger, which is a valuable asset of society. The implementation of elder nursing mode of “elder-supporting-elder” can fully mobilize and utilize those old people with special vocational skills, but also benefit more old people, as well as meet the realization of self-worth of old people.

B. Clear the Helping Purpose to Facilitate the Timely Implementation

There must be some commonality for the old people in the same area, especially the old people in the same place. Although the needs of each old people is different, their living environments are similar and there is also a big intersection, therefore, the old people can better understand each other's needs and each other's lives demands, the implementation of elder-supporting-elder of elder nursing mode can further clear the purpose of helping, thus to better achieve the expected objective of mutual support. In addition, the elder nursing, no matter in the basic life aspect or spiritual aspects, shall be implemented one by one by someone within a certain of time, but the fierce social competition in modern times makes the young people almost has no spare time to do those things, and young people can hardly meet the elder nursing needs especially the in spiritual level, and the implementation of “elder-supporting-elder” can maximally achieve spiritual consolation to the old people, the old people has sufficient time to spend with each other and help each other, and the effect is far better than that done by young people. This can also explain why many old people prefers apartments for the old people but not family supporting, when they chose family supporting at home, their children are all out for work and they are unaccompanied. While in the old apartment, a group of old people can be closely associated from morning till evening, and they have spiritual resonance and common preferences, thus they can live a better life.

C. Reduce Suicide and Crime Probability of the Old People and Benefit the Harmony and Stability of the Society

When the basic livelihood of the old people cannot be guaranteed and their spirit cannot be entrusted nor be resolved through normal channels, the suicide or crime phenomenon is easily occur. Some children with no filial piety do not want to support their parents, and they leave the old people at home alone, also there are no relatives and friends actively come for caring and helping them, under this condition, the old people have to steal other people's things forced by livelihoods, even some old people despair to the life and suicide themselves by hanging or ingesting pesticide, such tragedies have been occurred to more than a few people in rural area every year. So, in addition to the existing elder nursing way, we have to exploit ways as many as possible to help with the elder nursing, letting them have confident in life and spend their old age with peaceful mind. While the elder nursing way of “elder-supporting-elder” exactly can

effectively solve this problem, on the one hand, the mutual support among the old people can reduce the loneliness of the old people and benefit the mental health of the old people; on the other hand, with timely material supply, the old people with living difficulties will not have to be forced to the road of crime and suicide, which can play a significant role for the harmony and stability in rural area.

III. SEVERAL MODES OF “ELDER-SUPPORTING-ELDER” IN J VILLAGE

We can see the great effort of mutual support mode of the elder-supporting-elder, under this driving; we carry out related surveys to the J Village, Yichang City in Hubei and collate three elder-supporting-elder mode of this village.

A. “Elder-Supporting-Elder” between the Neighbors

As the saying goes: “A close neighbor is better than a brother far off”, in the rural area, they attach importance to contacting with neighbors, most people have a rather friendly relationship with the neighbors, as it was “like a familiar member although it is not”, if there are any difficulties, the neighbors will come to help. Therefore, the mutual support between the neighbor old people is very wide in rural area, it is a spontaneous personal act out of love and compassion which is not affected by blood relationship nor subject to the provisions of the law or policy, or even a volunteerism of community nature.

Case 1: Grandmother Huang is a 73-year-old woman in the village, her children work in the county all year round, only she and her husband is at home, their bodies is still healthy, their rice is brought by their children and the vegetables are basically planted by themselves, there are only cucumbers, green peppers, cabbage and radish, there is no more foods even for the Spring Festival. Grandfather Wang, the neighbor of grandmother Huang, is a retired teacher in the village, every month he can receive a certain of pension on time, and his life can be secured fairly, in ordinary days, once he has delicious foods, he will send some to grandmother Huang, and needless to say in the holidays, he will send rice dumplings in the Dragon Boat Festival and moon cake in Mid-Autumn Festival. Sometimes, he will send his idle clothes bought by his children to them.

Case 2: Grandfather Shu is 80 years old in this year, his wife is in poor health and stay in bed all the year around, their only son is work out, in ordinary days, grandfather Shu has no other activity expect for accompanying his wife, his neighbors grandfather Wang is 8 years younger than him, grandfather Wang often go to grandfather Shu to have a chat, they are like two brothers to talking about some interesting, and grandfather Shu is very happy.

From the above two cases we can see that, in rural area, the mutual support between the neighbor old people exists everywhere, which has infiltrated into the daily lives of the old people, not only the help in substance is provided, but also the help in spirit is more apparent, the contacts between the neighbors in daily life can effectively resolve the loneliness of the old people. Although the neighbors can help a lot in life, but the help of the neighbors is not enough to

meet the needs of old people in all aspects of life, and the daily living of the old people still cannot be guaranteed.

B. *“Elder-Supporting-Elder” between the Relatives and Friends*

Compared with the mutual aid between neighbors, the mutual support by friends and relatives seems more deserved, the mutual support established basing on genetic connection seems more stable, and the helping ways is more rich and variable than the help among the neighbors.

Case 3: Grandfather Li is a doctor in the village in early years, and later he retired, his son married a girl in the village, and his daughter also married a boy in the village, his children with filial piety support him and he lives in good condition. Grandfather Wen, a friend of Grandfather Li in this childhood, lives a relative poor conditions, Grandfather Li will send rice, oil, meat and household items to his old friends from time to time and hope he can live better.

Case 4: Grandmother Zhao's sister lost her husband a few years ago, and her children is far in Guangdong, so she always live alone. Grandmother Zhao's son and daughter are famers in the village and they have been living with grandmother Zhao, they often invent grandmother Zhao's sister to their home to live together for a few days, the two sisters talking and laughing, it is also because the accompanying of the older sister's family, grandmother Zhao's sister does not feel so lonely.

The mutual support among the relatives and friends is not only stable and lasting but also can providing sense of belonging and happiness to the old people, even they live in separated door, the blood is thicker than water and the feeling cannot be replaced. However, each old people have their own families with various problems, they cannot always rely on relatives for supporting for long time, so they needs to find a better elder nursing way.

C. *Volunteers for “Elder-Supporting-Elder”*

In J village, there is a “sunset red volunteer team” which has been established for six years, it is a team composed by more than twenty retired veteran cadres and old villagers with good health and high quality, some of them are retired doctors, some are retired teachers, and some are retired cadres, their average age over 65 years old, the oldest are 71 years old while the youngest is 56 years old. Under the leadership of the village secretary and basing on the principle of “voluntary and unpaid service”, this team regularly is active in the village in providing public service, and they spontaneously organize an organization to go to the home of e poor, disabled and old people to provide services and spiritual care to them. They will appear wherever they are needed.

Case 5: Grandfather Xiang of 85-year-old is an empty-nest old people in the village, he lost his wife in early years and fathered a daughter, his daughter rarely goes home since she got married, and grandfather Xiang lives alone. He said:” The service team will come to my house every month to measure my blood pressure, If there were no their help, I

won't t know I have high blood pressure, and now I care about my living habit, I really appreciate them, every time they come, they chat with me and help to clean the house, I am very happy.”

Case 6: Mr. Liu, a villager in J village, said that: “I have seen that service team for many times, each team member wears red hat and holding a toolbox, they visit the old people in the village from house to house, for several times they directly give a haircut and nail cut for the old people needs these help. Although I am not old, I also ask them to give me a haircut freely! I once asked and know that, their barber tools are their own tool.”

By the end of 2014, they have provided obligatory haircut approaching to 5000 times and provided the villagers for physical examination and health counseling for more than 4800 times, and organized more than 60 times of artistic performance. They established health records for the village so that they can know well about the diseases of the people, during carrying out these service activities, for the masses that live very far away and inconvenient to walk, the volunteers of the teams may walk several kilometers to take care of them and provide whatever services within their power. And there is no doubt that their existence can provide a lot of convenience for villagers in J village. However, because that the volunteer team are formed spontaneously and the members are limited, their services area limited and the service times are limited, such services can only serve as the effective supplement of the former two forms and rich the elder nursing, there are still many points cannot be achieved for the daily supporting of the old people.

IV. NEW CONCEPTION OF THE REALIZATION OF “ELDER-SUPPORTING-ELDER”

Through the general survey of the “elder-supporting-elder”, we can easily find their respective strengths and weaknesses, and the current reality in turn determines that, the “elder-supporting-elder” is bound to become the main trend of the elder nursing in the rural area in the future, so it needs to be enriched and developed to maximally play its unique functions. I believe that, the mutual support among the old people shall be the “elder-supporting-elder” carried out subject to the different needs of old people, and this kind of mutual support shall be uninterrupted but not just a certain time.

The old people in the rural area can be mainly divided into two major categories, old people living alone and old people not living alone. The old people living alone are neither accompanied by children nor his spouse, they are the masses with urgently need “elder-supporting-elder”, secondly, among the old people not living alone, some of them are empty nesters, their children are not around to taking care of their daily life, and only the two old couple are hanging on together; the others are single old people, although their children can attend upon and please, they have lost their spouse and feel lonely; and the rest is common old people with their children and spouses accompanied. In addition to the old people with the conditions above, the health conditions of the old people are different, and there

are many people suffering diseases and old people with disability, they are the key object who needs help. According to the survey on the old people in J Village, we find that, old people have a stronger demand on basic living, health and social contacts, and subject to the different needs of old people, I give out several new conceptions on the development of “elder-supporting-elder”.

A. Implement the Mutual Support Between the Old People With Heterosexual Marriage as a Link

This conception is primarily subject to the old people living alone or the single old people not living alone. The single old people whether they have their children accompanied or not, are willing to be accompanied by a spouse deeply in their heart, and a very considerate companion is the needs that their children, relatives and friends cannot give. The old people have their own way of life, the old couple can support each other in life and each plays their strengths, at the same time, they can listen to each other and become each other's spiritual pillar, so I think we can implement the mutual support between the old people basing on heterosexual marriage. In this regard, the village can set up a matchmaking organization dedicated to the old people and create an opportunity for the single old people to rebuild a family. In fact, in rural area, many old people have the will to remarry, but they are bounded by conservative ideas and they fears rumor of the villagers and the objections of their children, and finally the willing cannot be achieved, therefore, the organization responsible for matchmaking shall not only make a match for the suitable old people but also use their own way to guide and convince the old people and children to break various antiquate idea and obstacles of reality, and implement this humanized mutual support in the local area.

B. The Implementation of Mutual Support of One-to-Many

This conception is mainly subject to the old people suffering diseases. In the past, usually there are some village doctors in the rural area, and they are commonly known as the barefoot doctors, although they did not accept formal medical training when they were young, they did master medical and sanitary knowledge, they can treat the villagers with their own folk methods and make contribution to the medical treatment cause in rural area. Today, the age of barefoot doctors has passed for a long time and many barefoot doctors of that time have been old, but their medical skills can still play its value, to this, we can take the mutual strategy of one-to-many, which means a village doctor can pay more attention to the health conditions of the old people around and provide help for their health. The village can help the doctor to establish a health record on the health of the old people around, and provide information to the doctor, so that he can better know the physical condition of these old people and to help them especially those old people with seriously ill and needs health concerns. At the same time, the village can arrange specialized medical staff to give training for this doctor, such as blood pressure measuring and how to deal with medical emergencies, etc., thus to enrich their medical skills and organizing a service team to provide on-site health care services on this basis, in this way, the routine medical

examinations and caring of the sick old people can be more perfect.

C. Implement Many-to-One Mutual Support in Life

This conception mainly targets the disable old people. For the disabled old people, life and action inconvenience due to acquired body defect is an important factor to influence support for them, especially for these disabled old people left behind and the old people without spouse, original lonely old age life is worse due to physical disability, for this, many-to-one mutual support strategy can be taken into consideration, that is, several old people help a disable old person. Taking a disable old person as the center, those healthy and low age old people scattering around his home establish a mutual support network together. Other old people in the mutual network take turns to help the disable old person in life on time, such as cooking, washing clothes, cleaning house, feeding animals and so on. Then the disabled person will be helped by a group of people in daily life and his life will be more convenient.

D. Strive to Develop and Strengthen Voluntary Service

For the ordinary old people, we should pay attention to providing various voluntary services to them, while the emphasis of “elder-supporting-elder” mode is that the old people provide voluntary service for the old people. In rural area, because voluntary service is carried out sporadically, the effect does not come to expectations as expected, voluntary service must become large-scale and organize voluntary activity, which can provide more help and service for the old people. Take voluntary service team in J Village as an example, although the team provides a lot of help for the old people in the village, it is only a small group organized by the old villagers voluntarily, with very few participants and relatively single service category and more points can be developed perfect. However, the current small service team evokes repercussions in the village. It can be seen that, prospect of voluntary service is fairly broad. If the voluntary service can be operated and development in large scale and systematization, we believe that it will certainly provide more unexpected help to the old people. Therefore, the author believes that, old party cadres willing to participate in voluntary service can be called up in the village and reemployed. The old people voluntary service center should be established by taking the old party cadres as the core, and the old school in the village deserted and idle should be rebuilt as office of service center. This service center, on one hand, is responsible for social donation externally and collection of voluntary money, on the other hand, is responsible for choosing talents wanted, attracting and arranging other volunteers to carry out relevant work and establishing a set of operation mode on their own. Meanwhile, key work of service center is to dig more service projects for the old people and meet diversified demand of the old people. For example, we should deliver two meals a day or three meals a day to some old people with very special family background, regularly provide necessities of life and psychological counseling to them, offer entertainment venues in the office and arrange corresponding felicities in the site, such as television, DVD player and

books and chess and cards, etc. to enrich life of the old people. Thus, support for the old people in rural area may be a new sight.

V. CONCLUSION

“Elder-supporting-elder” mainly takes full advantage of human resources of healthy and low-age old people to help sick, disabled and advanced-age old people. Mutual support has its unique advantages and extensive attention should be given to its development by the society. It should be taken as an effective supplement of family elder nursing and society elder nursing model and should be enriched and perfected constantly. We believe that in the near future, more rural old people will benefit from this.

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